

Selected Story.

A Swamp Mystery.

The summer of the year 1862 was particularly hot on the coast of North Carolina; it even did something to counteract the more destructive heat of the civil war. General Burnside had captured a long reach of the seaboard and had established his headquarters at Newbern. No battles followed very soon, nor any storms to speak of, but the army and the weather were fast getting into a high state of preparation for either kind of event.

There were Union troops at Fort Macon and Morehead City, not many miles up the coast from Newbern, and much pay was due them. The money came down from the North in July, and a couple of paymasters received orders to go at once and deal it out to the men.

Before the war a railway had been constructed from Newbern to Morehead City. Its rails were still there, but all its rolling stock, with the exception of one hand-car, had gone into the interior of the state. The viaduct was just wide enough to carry the rails, and much of its course was through a swamp whose dense bushes were now luxuriantly reaching out, as if they meant to capture the track before the end of the season.

The quartermaster placed his one hand-car at the disposal of the paymasters. He did so with the pleasant information that on the previous evening the busy confederates had made a raid and had swept away all the pickets posted along the line of the railway. New pickets had been posted, he told them, and their proposed trip would be reasonably safe. "That is," he said, "I guess you're safe from any confederates, but if you don't get through before dark I'd advise you to be pretty prompt about answering any hail. The boys'll all be awake this time. They won't be slow about taking care of themselves in the dark. Not a man of 'em wants to go to Wilmington, just now, nor to Andersonville, either."

That warning made the paymaster shake his head and grow in importance before the hand-car set out, for it was plain enough that it would be dark before the trip could be half made. Precisely how dark it would be, or why, was not as yet imagined by anybody.

There were nine men huddled on that hand-car when it went. A sergeant and four soldiers were its motive power, guard and garrison. The writer of this story was there altogether as an adventurer. Two paymasters, with the rank of major, and one clerk, with the rank of captain, were scattered among the volunteers on the morrow.

The air grew more and more clear and sultry, and just before night a sort of haze began to rise over the eastern horizon.

"That's it, major," said the sergeant to one of the paymasters. "We're going to hear from Cape Hatteras."

"Storm coming?"

"Right along. It won't take it long to come."

He was correct as to the time required by Cape Hatteras, or whatever was managing that storm. The sky rapidly grew black as ink and darkness came with but moderate reference to the departing sun. Just before entering the denser thickets of the swamp a picket was reached, and the officer in charge repeated the warning of the quartermaster.

"Be ready to answer right away. It'll be pitch dark, and some of the boys are nervous after last night's work. They'll shoot quick."

That was to the sergeant, but it was a paymaster who replied:

"Well, now, captain, we didn't say so, but we thought the trip would be safer by night than by day. The men have got to have the money."

"Hope the boys won't get it, then. Put her through, sergeant, but look sharp; the storm's most got here." In ten minutes more such a storm had arrived as was a credit to Cape Hatteras and the whole seacoast of North Carolina. On rolled the hand-car, its crouching passengers drenched with rain that fell in streams rather than drops. The lightning flashed almost incessantly, and the thunder seemed to be rolling around all over the swamp. Except where a streak of lightning cleft it, the darkness was like a solid wall, and there was neither head-light nor hand-lantern provided for that hand-car.

"Worst storm I ever saw," remarked the sergeant, and one of the brace of men who were acting as motive power grunted back at him: "It's the worst kind of storm; but you can't see it."

It was a just correction of the statement made by the sergeant, but at that moment a hoarse, deep, all sepulchral voice from among the bushes and darkness at the right of the track commanded:

"Halt!"

"Stop her! Quick, boys!" exclaimed the sergeant, and as the men changed instantly from motive power to brakes he sprang from the car into water above his knees and waded forward to answer the hail and give the countersign.

It was all in vain. Down came a double deluge of rain and thicker darkness. Then a vividness of blue electricity danced through the dripping bushes, and a great roar of thunder followed it, as if in search of a hidden "picket." Neither rain nor lightning nor thunder nor the anxious questionings of the sergeant discovered him.

There he was, or must have been, dead or alive, for he had said "halt," and that was apparently all he had to say.

The sergeant splashed his way back to the hand-car and it was decided to go forward.

"We're just likely to be fired on first thing," remarked the paymaster's clerk, "and they'd hit some of us, sure!"

Both of the paymasters agreed with him and one expressed his satisfaction that the box containing the greenbacks was waterproof.

"That's more than I am," said one of the soldiers. "This 'er rain's got through my roof. I can feel it trickle down inside of me."

The hand-car was not propelled rapidly after that, but the lightning and thunder worked harder than ever. Per-

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haps half a mile had been gained, when another voice, on the left this time and not so near, but equally hoarse and peremptory, shouted:

"Halt!"

Other words which seemed to follow were swallowed up by a wide-mouthed clap of thunder, and so was the sergeant's prompt response, but in an instant he was among the bushes.

The first we heard of him was:

"Boys, it's up to my waist and getting deeper!"

"Go on, sergeant!" shouted one of the paymasters. They'll be shooting at us if they don't get an answer!"

"Hurrah for General Burnside!" squeaked the paymaster's clerk, in a vague effort to let any supposed picket know which side he was on; but a severe sternness from the further end bade him:

"Shut up! Halt! Come along!"

"I'm coming!" shouted the sergeant. "Friend! Paymaster!"

"Shut up! Come along!" responded the threatening voice beyond him.

For a full quarter of an hour the sergeant groped and floundered among those bushes; but not a soul came to meet him, nor did another word reply to his repeated requests that the picket should advise him as to what course he should take.

The party on the hand-car cowered under torrents of falling water, and hoped that there might be a cessation of the lightning flashes, so that any hidden rifle-men would be less able to shoot straight.

"I give it up," said the voice of the sergeant at last. He was only three paces from the car, but he was invisible.

"The boys know who we are," said one of the soldiers, "and we can go on; but it's an awful mean joke to play in such a rain as this."

"There's something more than that in it," said one of the paymasters. "There's a trap of some kind. We'll never get to Morehead City."

"We'll go ahead, anyhow," said the sergeant. "There's as much danger behind as there is before."

"I'm glad I hurried for Burnside," remarked the paymaster's clerk.

On went the hand-car into the water-soaked darkness, and another mile or more was rolled over before the way-side summons was sonorously repeated.

"Quick, now, sergeant!" said the senior paymaster.

"Don't know, major," he replied. "That fellow's away into the swamp. He's got under cover. I couldn't even find him. Risk it! Boys, risk it! Run her ahead. They can't hit us if they fire."

"Halt!" came warningly out of the blackness as the hand-car dashed forward, and with it came thunder that sounded like a rattle of musketry.

"They didn't work their joke this time, major," said the sergeant.

"There's more than that in it," said the major. "I'm glad we're past that picket, but I'm afraid we're running into trouble. They may have surprised Morehead City and the fort."

"Reckon not, major. Run her your level best, boys. We won't halt again for anybody."

That was brave talk, but in less than twenty minutes he exclaimed:

"Hold on, boys! That picket is right on the track. Stop her for your lives!"

They did so, as an ominous and menacing throat repeated:

"Halt!" and from the rear, at the same moment, the other voices seemed to say:

"Got 'em! Got 'em now!"

"I'm afraid they have," groaned the major, "money and all, and we're on our way to Wilmington."

"No use to hurrah for Burnside this time," squeaked the paymaster's clerk.

The sergeant ran ahead along the track until he missed his footing in the dark and went off into a grimy depth of water and black mud just as somebody said:

"Who's there?" and he was trying to respond:

"Friend, with the countersign."

His mouth had too much in it for success. Then he heard him say:

"Come along, boys! There isn't anybody here, and the water's six inches deep over the track."

It was a doleful mystery, and the chance of being fired into grew grisly enough as the car was dubiously urged forward.

The fierceness of the storm diminished, and thus, with a great gust of wind from Cape Hatteras, it ceased. More wind came and swept away the clouds. The moon came out gloriously, and at that very moment the paymaster's clerk exclaimed:

"Quick, sergeant! They could see to shoot now!"

"Halt! Come along! Got 'em! Got 'em now! Bully! Better mount! Better mount!"

"That was what it sounded like, but the sergeant exclaimed:

"Abraham Lincoln! If it doesn't make five times that we've been halted by those confederate frogs!"

In half an hour more we were all safe in Morehead City, leaving the frogs to play jokes on somebody else—Boston Globe.

HE WAS NEAR THE BRINK.

The Graphic Account of a Most Wonderful Occurrence which Took Place in Kingston, N. Y.

(Special Correspondence Boston Paper.)
An event has taken place in this city so remarkable in its nature, that I venture to describe it in full. The principal in the affair is Mr. Jesse Smith, son of Cornelius B. Smith, of the State Insurance Department at Albany, who is well known, stands very high, and is in every way reliable. I have had a long and most interesting interview with him, which I transcribe and send you in his own words, trusting it may prove valuable to your readers:

"During last year," he said, "I could not understand what was the trouble with me. I had always felt strong and hearty, but I gradually became aware that something was undermining me. I first began to feel drowsy, and then in a day or two I would be unconscious, and would come to in a very strange way. I was sometimes hungry and sometimes I hated food, while my sleep was very irregular. I could not understand it, but I thought it might pass away after a while. I don't know how long it lasted, but I suppose I was like most people who are troubled in the same way, and thought it nothing dangerous. After a while I noticed a peculiar color and odor about the fluids I was passing; that they were dark at times and very light at others. Finally I began to gain flesh, but I knew that it was unnatural and that I was bloating. This frightened me and I consulted physicians, who were very kind in their attentions, but did not help me in the least. My father then went with me to New York, and we consulted the eminent Dr. Kelly, who told me for several weeks. At that time my condition was horrible, I was bloated from head to foot, it was almost impossible to breathe, and I could not sleep. In several places on my body the skin burst open, so great was the pressure from within. The agony I endured was indescribable. Then the doctor told me my case was hopeless, that I had Bright's disease in its worst form, and that I had only a few days to live."

"Fortunate as I had a friend who accompanied me and would not see me die without a struggle. He did not urge, he insisted on my making one effort, and I did so. I noticed an improvement at once; in four days the swelling greatly decreased and the pain wholly ceased. I continued to improve and am a well man to-day, and owe my life to the marvelous power of that wonderful preparation—Hunt's Remedy. I believe this is the greatest medicine that was ever discovered by man, and I only wish the whole world might know what it has done for me."

"I know there are thousands of people troubled as I was and in just as great danger, but they do not realize it. Bright's disease is the most dangerous of all diseases, and it is only when it is in its last stage that it is recognized. It has no settled symptoms, but assumes every imaginable form. I had no idea that it was Bright's disease that was undermining me until I began to bloat, and now that I am well and enjoying my life, I feel like telling everybody about my miraculous escape. Is it any wonder this town is so crowded over my resurrection?"

Such is the account of probably as narrow an escape from death as was ever known. The first symptoms which Mr. Smith felt were such as many others feel but not consider worth noticing. It is plain, however, that the early indications of a dangerous disease cannot be trifled with, but must be promptly and, if a remedy as has been proven to be indeed a friend in time of need.

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Trains leaving Montpelier at 8:20 A. M. and 1:30 P. M. make close connections at Wells River for all points in the White Mountains, and for points north and south on the Passumpsic railroad; also for Boston and all intermediate points.

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S. CELINDA JACK'S ESTATE.
COMMISSIONER'S NOTICE.
The undersigned, having been appointed by the Honorable Probate Court for the District of Washington, Commissioners to receive, examine and adjust all claims and demands of all persons against the estate of S. Celinda Jack, late of Calais, in said District, deceased, and all claims exhibited in offset thereto, hereby give notice that we will meet for the purpose aforesaid, at the residence of Mrs. Susan P. Prindle, on the 15th day of June, next, at 10 o'clock A. M., and on the 22nd day of June, next, from ten o'clock P. M. until four o'clock P. M., each of said days, and that six months from the 22nd day of March, A. D. 1888, is the time limited by said Court for said creditors to present their claims to us for examination and allowance.

Dated at Calais, this 15th day of May, A. D. 1888.
ALBERT D. WICKELL, Commissioner.
A. G. DEITY, Commissioner.

LYMAN PRINDLE'S ESTATE.
COMMISSIONER'S NOTICE.